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FM AMCONSUL LAGOS
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8196
RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHUJA/AMEMBASSY ABUJA PRIORITY 8050
INFO RUFOADA/JAC MOLESWORTH AFB UK
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC
RUCPDOC/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC
RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHINGTON DC
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC

C O N F I D E N T I A L LAGOS 001375

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

DOE FOR GPERSON,CGAY
TREASURY FOR ASEVERENS, SRENENDER, DFIELDS
COMMERCE FOR KBURRESS
STATE PASS USTR FOR ASST USTR SLISER
STATE PASS TRANSPORTATION FOR MARAD
STATE PASS OPIC FOR ZHAN AND MSTUCKART
STATE PASS TDA FOR NCABOT
STATE PASS EXIM FOR JRICHTER
STATE PASS USAID FOR GWEYNAND AND SLAWAETZ

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/22/2016

TAGS: EPET PGOV ASEC PTER PINR ETRD CASC NI

SUBJECT: MILITANTS KIDNAP 7 EXPATS FROM AGIP VESSEL, NO
AMCITS

Classified By: Consul General Brian Browne for Reasons 1.4 (D & E)

¶1. (C) Summary. On November 22, militants reportedly took seven expatriates hostage from AGIP's FPSO Mystras vessel. No American citizens are involved in this incident, according to an AGIP contact. The British Deputy High Commission reported that one British, a Romanian, a Filipino, an Italian, a Polish, and two Finnish nationals were removed from the stationary FPSO vessel. AGIP told Poloff no shots were fired and that no injuries occurred. Honorary Consul to the Canadian High Commission reported a USD 3.5 million ransom was made. Unconfirmed security reports suggest this was a community-initiated attack carried out by militant mercenaries. End Summary.

¶2. (C) Security sources report approximately 10-12 militants in several speed boats climbed aboard the vessel (its gangway or anchor chain was lowered at the time) early morning November 22. The militants purportedly removed all portable communications equipment from the vessel. According to our AGIP contact, the vessel's military security guards surrendered their guns to the militants--no shots were fired. Our AGIP contact said no one--expatriate/Nigerian or worker/militant--was injured.

¶3. (C) FPSO Mystras is managed by the Italian company Saipem, and was located approximately 30 kilometers off shore from Bonny Island, Rivers State. The Security Officer for the Canadian High Commission told the RSO their Honorary Consul in Port Harcourt had reported militants demanded a ransom of USD 3.5 million by 8am November 22. The militants then took the seven expatriates off the vessel. Security sources report the attack was purportedly at the behest of one of the local communities on Bonny. The same security sources believe the militants were probably hired by the community, with the understanding that they will receive a share of whatever payments the community can collect for the release of the septet.

¶4. (C) The vessel is attached to a rig one and a half miles away, via umbilical, according to RSO's OSAC contact. Diving operations connecting the production umbilical to the FSPO have been suspended and the rig is on standby rate (ready to pull anchor and change location once diving operations are completed). AGIP's Gannett II security boat, which evidently was unable to respond to the early morning attack, remains in the vicinity.

BROWNE